

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00
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UNCLAS CAIRO 08197

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRD, EG
SUBJ: EGYPTIAN IMPORT POLICY

1. ARTICLE IN CAIRO DAILY AL GUMHURIYYA MARCH 14
REPORTED THAT, EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 1978, GOE WILL "SUSPEND"
ISSUANCE OF LICENSES FOR IMPORTATION OF 81 COMMODITIES
WHICH ARE LOCALLY PRODUCED OR SUBSTANTIAL STOCKS OF WHICH
ALREADY EXIST IN EGYPT. COMMODITIES AFFECTED INCLUDE
CERTAIN TEXTILE RAW MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS, TIRES,
TELEPHONE CABLES, TRACTORS, MATCHES, PETROLEUM COKE,
TOOTHPASTES, MAKE-UP, AND PERFUMES.

2. COMMENT: NEWS ARTICLE LACKS DETAIL, AND WE ARE
SEEKING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THROUGH MINTRADE SOURCES.
REPORTED MINTRADE ACTION, HOWEVER, FITS PATTERN OF RECENT
INDICATIONS THAT GOE IS MOVING TO IMPOSE NEW RESTRICTIONS
ON IMPORTS. FOR EXAMPLE, MINISTER OF TRADE ZAKARIA
TEWFIK ABDEL FATTAH WAS QUOTED IN MARCH 12 CAIRO PRESS
AS INDICATING THAT GOE INTENDED ENCOURAGE DOMESTIC IN-
DUSTRY BY LIMITING IMPORTS OF GOODS WHICH HAVE LOCALLY-
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PRODUCED EQUIVALENTS.

3. UNTIL GOE LIBERALIZED ITS TRADE AND ECONOMIC
REGULATIONS, BEGINNING IN 1974, IMPORTS WERE LIMITED BY
FACT THAT VIRTUALLY ALL IMPORTATION WAS IN HANDS OF GOE
AGENCIES, AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE WAS IN SHORT SUPPLY.
RECENT CHANGES IN LEGISLATION, HOWEVER, HAVE BROKEN

GOVERNMENTAL IMPORT MONOPOLY AND HAVE GIVEN ACCESS, THROUGH OWN-EXCHANGE IMPORT SYSTEM, TO PRIVATELY-HELD SOURCES OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE. AT PRESENT, EGYPT PROBABLY HAS ONE OF LEAST RESTRICTIVE IMPORT POLICIES AMONG THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. RESULT HAS BEEN FLOOD OF IMPORTS, MANY OF WHICH COMPETE WITH LOCALLY-PRODUCED GOODS.

4. WE WILL CONTINUE REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS AREA AS THEY MAY AFFECT U.S. IMPORTS. ALTHOUGH BULK OF CURRENT U.S. IMPORTS PROBABLY DO NOT HAVE LOCALLY-PRODUCED EQUIVALENTS, FUTURE COURSE OF TRADE COULD BE ALTERED BY NEW GOE POLICY. EILTS

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